

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 NIC-01 AID-20 PC-04 NSC-10 RSR-01 /072 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4945

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USIAC

EO 11652: N/A

SUBJ: TELEVISION SITREP

REF: SANTIAGO 2664

1. SUMMARY: UNIVERSITY OF CHILE'S NEW TELEVISION STATION, CHANNEL 6, CONTINUES TO FUNCTION WITHOUT DIRECT GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE WHILE CHANNEL 9 IS STILL ON AIR DESPITE ULTIMATUM TO CEASE BROADCASTING ISSUED BY NATIONAL TELEVISION COUNCIL. END SUMMARY

2. FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER INTRODUCING TELEVISION TO CHILE, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE HAS BEGUN AGAIN. SINCE REAPPEARANCE OF CHANNEL 6 ON JULY 7, THE GOC HAS NOT INTERVENED DIRECTLY TO CURB TRANSMISSIONS ALTHOUGH GOC OFFICIALS IN PRESIDENTIAL INFORMATION OFFICE PRIVATELY ADMIT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR NEW STATION. BOTH INTERIOR SUB-SECRETARY VERGARA AND THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRIC SERVICES HAVE CHARGED THAT CHANNEL IS ILLEGAL. OPPOSITION CONTACTS CLAIM THE GOC INACTION IS GRUDGING RECOGNITION OF UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY PRINCIPLE UNDERLINED BY OPPOSITION MOVE TO IMPEACH FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER ESPINOZA FOR AUTHORIZING JUNE 19 RAID WHICH PARTIALLY DESTROYED CHANNEL 6 SOON AFTER ITS DEBUT (REFTEL). UNIVERSITY RECTOR BOENINGER HAS PLEDGED TO REBUILD CHANNEL "AS MANY TIMES AS NECESSARY". SAGA OF NEW FACILITY HAS ATTRACTED WIDE-

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SPREAD NEWS COVERAGE AND CAPTURED INTEREST OF PUBLIC. STUDENT

EFFORTS TO COLLECT CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. OPPOSITION CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS AND PRESS HAVE STRONGLY SUPPORTED BOENINGER-LED EFFORT WHILE LEFTIST PRESS AND POLITICAL LEADERS REFER TO CHANNEL 6 AS THE "PIRATE CHANNEL" AND "STATION OF THE RIGHT".

3. ACTUAL ON-SCREEN PICTURE QUALITY VERY LOW, AND STATION'S EQUIPMENT PRIMITIVE. RECEPTION IS PARTICULARLY POOR IN SOME OUTLYING SECTORS OF SANTIAGO BECAUSE OF INFERIOR SIGNAL AND INTERFERENCE BY HILLS.

4. STRATEGY AS EXPRESSED BY UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES IS TO STAY ON AIR AT ALL COSTS, PRESS PSYCHOLOGICAL "VICTORY" OVER CHANNEL 9 AND MAKE TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

5. WHILE CHANNEL 6 STRUGGLING TO ESTABLISH ITS BIRTHRIGHT, NATIONAL TELEVISION COUNCIL (OPPOSITION HOLDS MAJORITY) RULED THAT CHANNEL 9 NO LONGER LEGAL ENTITY OF UNIVERSITY OF CHILE AND DELIVERED ULTIMATUM STIPULATING THAT CHANNEL STOP TRANSMISSION EFFECTIVE JULY 17. COUNCIL'S RULING CONDEMNED BY CHANNEL 9, WHICH HAS VOWED TO REMAIN ON AIR AS "CHANNEL OF THE PEOPLE." SOURCE AT CHANNEL 13 CLAIMS CHANNEL 9 "FINISHED" FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES. CITES CUTOFF FROM UNIVERSITY, INTERNAL SQUABBLING, REDUCED BUDGET, LOW VIEWERSHIP AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS ALL CONTRIBUTING TO STATION'S PRESENT DEMISE. IN ADDITION, RUMORS CIRCULATING THAT CHANNEL 9 FACILITY WILL BE TAKEN OVER BY STATE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (UTE) AND BECOME CHANNEL 11.

6. CHANNEL 13, MEANWHILE, IS STEADILY CREEPING SOUTHWARD AND EXPECTS TO COVER SOUTHERN LAKE REGION (OSORNO-VALDIVIA AREA) BY YEAR END. RATING STILL SHOW CHANNEL 13 FAR AHEAD IN VIEWERSHIP IN AREAS IT COVERS WITH EVENING NEWSCASTS GARNERING UP TO 81.1 PERCENT OF VIEWING PUBLIC.
VILLARREAL

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Draft Date: 18 JUL 1973
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ISecure: 1
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